L. H. Hall

REMINISCENCES OF CANADA,

AND THE

EARLY DAYS OF FERGUS;

BEING THREE LECTURES

Delivered to the Farmers' and Mechanics' Institute, Fergus,

BY A. D. FERRIER,

IN A. D., 1864 AND 1865.

GUELPH, C. W.:
PRINTED AT THE MERCURY BOOK AND JOB OFFICE, DAY'S BLOCK.
1866.

REMINISCENCES OF CANADA,

AND THE

EARLY DAYS OF FERGUS;

BEING THREE LECTURES

Delivered to the Farmers' and Mechanics' Institute, Fergus,

BY A. D. FERRIER,

IN A. D., 1864 AND 1865.

GUELPH, C. W.:
PRINTED AT THE MERCURY BOOK AND JOB OFFICE, DAY'S BLOCK.
1866.

REMINISCENCES OF CANADA;

BY AN OLD SETTLER.

On the twentieth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and thirty, I left Greenock in the good ship *Rebecca*, and arrived at Quebec on the 4th day of June. We first saw Cape Ray, the South-west corner of Newfoundland, after being twenty-nine days out. We had a sample of codfishing; and altogether, what with the log line, the deep sea line, and the various substitutes, we caught one hundred and eighteen fish. After making Newfoundland, we saw the Magdalen Islands on the 23rd of May covered with snow; then we saw Cape Rosier. The Bay of Seven Islands and the first houses were seen at Matane, a little village on the south side of the St. Lawrence, chiefly inhabited by pilots. We got to the Island of Bic on the 31st of May, and this day we saw a Hudson Bay Company's settlement. We also saw Mites, a settlement formed by an old gentleman called McNider. After this the settlements are continuous as you sail up the river, and a church is to be seen about every nine miles. The first American ground I set foot on was at Cape St. Ignace, where some of the passengers went ashore, so as to get up to Quebec a little sooner than the ship. The French Canadians keep their houses very nice and clean, but they look rather empty of furniture. Their pretty white houses and whitewashed roofs look very well as you sail up the river; and also the large churches with tin spires. The approach to Quebec, as we saw it on a fine summer's afternoon, is very beautiful. Just as you pass the end of the island of Orleans, there is a beautiful view of the Falls of Montmorency, and immediately after you round Point Levi, and there stands Quebec with its tin-roofed spires and houses, some of which look as if they were in the river, others creeping up the hillside, and the square lines of the Cape crowning the whole. The Upper Town within the fortifications is a queer little old fashioned place, and there is very little change on it now since I first saw it in 1830. The greater part of it belongs to the large and wealthy Roman Catholic Seminaries, Hospitals, &c., having been bequeathed to these institutions long before the city passed into the hands of the British. With one or two exceptions, the stores and shops in Fergus are superior to those in the Upper Town of Quebec. The suburbs, however, are much improved, the great fires having swept away multitudes of little wee wooden cottages, which were replaced by aid of the celebrated loans from the Provincial funds, which are not yet repaid, and will not likely be in any unreasonable hurry. The citadel of Quebec is on the highest part of the city—just on the edge of a precipice on one side next the St. Lawrence—and is undoubtedly a strong situation; but the heights on the Point Levi side, not more than a thousand yards distant, command the fort, and the place is approachable from the Plains of Abraham, although there are martello towers between the fortifications and the

Plains. The scenery around Quebec is beautiful, and, from the variety of mountain, river and lake on every hand, is unrivalled, I believe at least in British America. The house called Marchmont, in which I lived some two years, is situated just above Wolfe's cove, and close to the scene of the battle ground; and what is singular the officer of the Royal Navy, who commanded the sailors, who dragged the cannon from Wolfe's Cove to the Plains of Abraham, was my grand uncle, Lieutenant William Ferrier Hamilton. I know the place quite well; it is not so steep as is generally supposed, and nothing extra for the noble blue jackets of the Royal Navy to do. One day I started out with my youngest brother to the Plains, and with the help of a wheelbarrow, collected various fragments of shells and some round shot, and stacked them as a trophy before the door. The views at night all along the St. Lawrence are lovely, and nothing can excel a moonlight night with the ships lying in the stream, and steamers with their lights, and the sparks from their funnels as they float swiftly along to or from Montreal. In those days there was only one first-class Hotel in the Upper Town, known as Payne's, and I believe it was quite sufficient. Commercial business was altogether in the hands of British merchants, or natives of the United States. I was a clerk in what was a branch of the wealthiest and most enterprising house for inland produce, in Montreal. The head of the firm was a native of Vermont, but a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada—an enterprising, honorable and able man—President of the Bank of Montreal, and well known and much respected in the city of Montreal. In that situation I got acquainted with rafts and raftsmen; with flour, pork, beef, pot and pearl ashes, and the various descriptions of Canadian produce. The raftsmen—from the Ottawa especially—were many of them Highlanders, and wild looking fellows some of them were, especially the half-bloods, part French and part Indian. They used to come down with their rafts, get their pay—sometimes £40 and £50—spend it all in a few days, and then go back to the woods and begin making a new raft. Summer was a very busy time, but from January to May there was very little doing. In 1832 the cholera appeared in Quebec, and sad were the scenes that took place. Many of the merchants' offices had only one person in them. For weeks I was the only clerk in our establishment; one of the partners was ill with the disease, and seventy or eighty people were buried daily. My friends, the raftsmen, brought their rafts into the various coves, and hurried back as fast as possible to the woods of Upper Canada. Large sugar kettles burned day and night with tar at the corners of the streets, and a coffin maker started a shop close to our office. Many a time I walked home to our pleasant place, but following a coffin, as a new cemetery was just made on the road side leading home. It was said the cattle were affected, and dead fish floated on the bosom of the St. Lawrence. In God's good providence not a medical man, or a minister of the gospel was stricken, although they laboured unceasingly.

Politics troubled me very little in these days; still I have seen the great leaders of the party which finally broke out in open rebellion. Monsieur D. B. Viger dined at our house once, and a fine polite old gentleman he was—although rather a wild politician. I have seen Monsieur Papineau at other houses. He was a tall, dark looking man, stout and well made. I remember after the famous ninety-two resolutions were passed, hearing the Governor (Lord Aylmer), at the prorogation tell him that when the French were better educated they would not be so easily led astray. Education was very little heeded in Lower Canada then, and very few of the men could do more than make their mark; and on one occasion having to settle an account with the master of a small schooner, who was a Member of Parliament, the gentleman could not write, but made his cross in due form. Almost all the teachers were women, and their pay was miserable, ranging from £9 to

£22 or £23 per annum. There is a great improvement since then, and still room for more. The French Canadian people in the country parts are a fine, simple, contented race of people, but sadly deficient in enterprise; and their farming, in those days at least was miserable. Their religion I need not speak of, except just to say that the country priests, or *padres* as they are called, are generally both respected and respectable, and many of them gentlemen of education, and of course devoted to their own persuasion. The parish churches are very handsome internally, many of them richly ornamented, and even now in many large districts of Lower Canada there is not a Protestant Church to be seen for many miles. The French Canadians generally have a great dislike to the Irish, for what reason I could not find out, and have a partiality for the Scotch; indeed a good many Highlanders have from time to time settled in Lower Canada, and their descendants are now quite French in every respect. They still remember as a tradition that Mary Queen of Scotland was first Mary Queen of France.

My first visit to Montreal was in 1831. The sail up the river is beautiful, and, although then it was a small place compared to what it now is, great improvements had begun which have continued ever since. I paid a visit at that time to the nunnery of the Grey Sisters, and a kind old lady conducted my father and myself all through the building. We saw one poor old Scotch soldier who had fought in the Revolutionary War in the States, and who had his home with the good Grey Sisters. They are very wealthy, and do a great deal of good among the Roman Catholic people of all nations. I think the old soldier was one of Fraser's Highlanders. With regard to amusements, in summer in Quebec clerks have very little time for any at all, and I am sorry to say Sunday was generally their day of amusement, and rides and drives into the country were the commonest kind of relaxation. In winter, sleigh-riding is the most common amusement, and there used to be two tandem clubs which turned out in great force. On practising days they chose a leader and were obliged to follow wherever he went, and of course there was often great fun; some wild officer would start by taking them through all the most crooked streets in the Upper Town, then out at one of the city gates into the Lower Town, and if the St. Lawrence was bearing, on to the river and away at a rattling pace, and now and then they had pic-nics into the country, each driver having a lady. On one grand occasion I saw a sleigh or carriole with six horses at the head of the party, then twenty-one tandems and another sleigh and six to bring up the rear, and they drove across the St. Lawrence on the ice to the mouth of the Chaudiere. There was plenty snow-shoeing too, and very good almost all the winter. There was then only one curling club, and I don't think there was a skating club at all. I must not forget one famous piece of fun which was enjoyed by some of the young folks in winter, that is sliding down the Cone at the Falls of Montmorency in hand sleighs. The Cone is a beautiful mountain of ice formed by the spray of the falls, and gradually swells up to a great height, and one winter, when I lived at Quebec, it was nearly 110 feet high. The falls themselves are 240 feet high. Well, the French boys for a York shilling or fifteen pence, pull their hand sleighs up to the top of the Cone. Their sleigh just holds two and they get down on their belly on the sleigh, and the passenger behind, if he is afraid to guide it himself. Away they go, and if both lie still and steady there is no fear, and the impetus from the run down the cone takes the little sleigh a hundred yards, I daresay, along the ice at the foot of the cone if it is at all smooth. There is a connecting bank generally on one side not so steep, down which less adventurous people may go. The view from the cone looking towards the falls is very strange, but of course rather damp, and the only time I was there it was a mild day, so there was little amusement, but the scenery was very beautiful, and the

drive from Quebec across the ice was delightful, the distance being about six or seven miles.

As to Upper Canada, it was very little cared about, in fact it was looked upon as a poor contemptible new Colony, just good enough for poor people that could not live in Britain to go to, and desperately unhealthy, everybody being certain to be half killed by fever and ague. With regard to the races in Lower Canada, in those days I used to think to myself that the British Canadians rather looked down upon, and tyrannized over, the French Canadians; but things are very different now, and there is more fear of excess in the other way. I must say that in one respect we, in Upper Canada, now are guilty of the same thing. I used to remark thirty-four years ago we undervalue our French Canadian brethern. Now this is a great mistake. The French Canadians, except in education and agricultural enterprise, are quite our equals, and in their united and national cohesiveness are decidedly our superiors. Just look at their members of Parliament and ours; every French gentleman and their members are almost all in these days of the higher classes, understand the English language well, and most of them speak it pretty well too. Then look at our members of Parliament from Upper Canada, not one in twenty can read French, and not one in fifty can speak it or understand what a French member is saying. While in Quebec our old friend, the late Hon. Adam Fergusson, who had been acquainted with my father from the time they were boys, paid us a visit, and although a short one, was long remembered as a very pleasant event. My father, who was Collector of Customs, died in the spring of 1833, and I was left alone to stay another year in the merchant's office where I then was. In April, 1834, however, the Hon. Mr. Gates, the head of the firm, died, and five days afterwards his partner, Mr. Bancroft, died too, so the business was broken up, and I resolved to take a trip to Upper Canada, with a view of seeing Mr. Fergusson's settlement, and if I thought well of of it, making a purchase and finally settling there. Before finishing with Quebec I must make a few remarks on the military, as it is especially a garrison town. The regiments stationed in Quebec were the 15th, 24th, 32nd and 79th, with the usual proportion of artillery and engineers. Many good people have a great prejudice against soldiers. Well, from what I saw and heard, I must say it has small foundation. If allowance is made for the way in which our soldiers are enlisted, and for the many temptations to which they are exposed, I have no hesitation in saying that their behaviour, as compared with an equal proportion of other people, would bear a very fair comparison. And since these days of thirty years ago they have greatly improved. There are now good regimental schools and libraries, and reading rooms, and the officers often give lectures of a popular nature to the men. Discipline has always been strictly enforced in our army, greatly to the benefit of all parties. The men were always marched to church on Sundays, and there were always good and pious officers in every regiment. I remember seeing the 79th march into Mr. Clugston's Presbyterian Church, no band playing, and the children of the regiment with a respectable Sergeant at their head, and another bringing up the rear, take their places just below the pulpit. One of the regiment was precenter, too, and the church was as full as it could hold, and this regiment was one of Sir Colin Campbell's splendid brigades that turned the day at the Alma. Lord Aylmer, the Governor, a fine old soldier, an Irish gentleman, had no scruples in allowing the 79th to go to Mr. Clugston's, although he did not belong to the establishment, nor was even an army chaplain, but the men wished it and considered Mr. Clugston the most correct Presbyterian minister in Quebec, so there they went. I don't remember, during the four years I was in Quebec, of a single quarrel among the officers, although there might have been

between some of them and the civillians, there being always some jealousy between the red-coats and the black-coats. I think I have little more to say regarding Lower Canada. I must always remember it affectionately when I think of the kindness I received there, and that my father's remains lie buried in the church-yard of the little Protestant burying ground in the St. John's suburbs.

On the 14th of May, 1834, I left Quebec with the intention of visiting the Falls of Niagara and Mr. Fergusson's new settlement previous to taking a trip to Scotland. On the morning of the 15th, when I got on deck there was an inch or two of snow, otherwise there was nothing remarkable to note in the voyage. The scenery is much tamer after you leave Three Rivers, as the mountains and hills, which make so prominent a feature in the scenery about Quebec, all fade away, and the banks of the river are flat and comparatively uninteresting. The most comfortable hotel in those days was kept by Mr. Asa Goodenough, a tall, stout, hearty New Englander, and there for the first time I saw the stage for Lachine leave the court-yard drawn by six horses, and only one driver, which astonished me very much. Next day, the 17th, went by said stage to Lachine, and then took the steamer on the way to Bytown, now Ottawa. We went by the steamer to Carrillon, at the foot of the rapids of the Long Sault, on the Ottawa, and there put into a stage and taken to Grenville, at the head of said rapids. There the inns were full, and two or three of us slept comfortably enough on the floor. The sail up the Ottawa is beautiful, especially the rapids of St. Anne and the Lake of the Two Mountains, near which I believe old Mr. Louis Joseph Papineau is passing his old age in serenity and peace. Next morning I took a walk down to the river Ottawa, and saw a raft enter on the rapids. It quivered and shook a good deal, but disappeared, going out of sight at a great pace. These rafts are, however, often broken up before they get to Quebec, and such mishaps are a source of great profit to the French boatmen on the banks of the St. Lawrence. When it is known that a raft is wrecked, they get a lot of good strong staples and ropes and away they go, and as they come up with a stick they drive in a staple, pass through their rope, and thus gather as many sticks as they can pull after their boat. They take them to some safe timber cove, then find out the owner or consignee of the raft, and get so much a stick for salvage—our house in Quebec paid many a dollar in this way. We left in the steamer *Shannon*, and had a beautiful sail up the Ottawa, passing the mouths of the Calumette and Rouge rivers. There are very high falls on the Calumette, and I was told that a man named Jamieson, and eight others, had been lost running timber down the falls on the Rouge river. Jamieson was the first white man who ascended the Rouge river. We stopped at a river side inn this day, which bore the following sign: "James L. Gray's Hotel, lawfully established by Act of Parliament." The evening was beautiful and the river clear and smooth, and with a fine moon shining upon it. The approach to Bytown was most romantic. Bytown was so called after Col. Bye, the indefatigable officer of Engineers who superintended the making of the Rideau Canal. The Rideau Canal was made by the British Government, to unite Lake Ontario and Montreal by inland navigation remote from the frontier of the United States, so as to make a safe communication from the Upper to the Lower Province. It was a wild country, and from the many lakes and dams on the canal it was a very arduous and unhealthy undertaking, and many valuable lives were lost by disease, and in fact very few escaped severe trials from sickness. The situation of the place is beautiful. There is an upper and a lower town. The upper town is on the top of the high bank of the Ottawa, and commands a most picturesque view. It is close to the Chaudiere Falls, as they are called, where the Ottawa falls over a

number of slopes and cliffs in a broad and broken channel till united again below the Barrack grounds, the site I believe of the new Parliament and Government Buildings. I put up at the only decent hotel in those days in Upper Town, known as Chitty's Hotel, and as I knew an old gentlemen in the place he introduced me to some of his acquaintances, and I spent two or three days very pleasantly. There are eight locks at the very commencement of the Rideau Canal, and very handsome they are, all beautifully finished, and at that time were well worth a visit. The Ottawa here is the boundary between the two Provinces, and there was then a little village called Hull opposite Bytown, and a large farm belonging to Mr. Phelemon Wright, an old man who had left the States and settled down there. He was an M. P. for Lower Canada, and used to send rafts to Quebec, and I had seen the old gentleman. He had fought against the British in the Revolutionary War, but afterwards emigrated to Hull. Started for Kingston in one of the boats on the canal, and made the first five miles in three hours and a half, which of course is slow, but enables one to examine the country carefully. I don't think we ever went faster than five miles an hour. Wherever there were two or three locks we went ashore and had a run through the new clearings, and a chat with the settlers. A great deal of the scenery was very dull and uninteresting, but the Rideau lake is a beautiful place, with a great many pretty little islands of red granite, and well wooded. The narrows is another pretty scene: here was an old empty block house at one end, and another with two or three mounted guns at the other end, and a small garrison of five or six regular soldiers. At a place called Jones' Falls there is a splendid piece of work in the shape of a dam. The front is all of dressed stone, and the stones between five and six feet long and of proportionate width and thickness. The height of the dam is about seventy feet, and its length about two hundred and fifty. The course of the river was completely changed by this dam, and a cut was made through one bank to let off the surplus water, which makes what is known as "Jones' Falls." The locks of this place are the most perfect on the canal. A piece of the machinery broke, and we were detained at the Kingston mills, another pretty place, and fine locks. From this went in a boat to Kingston, about six miles, and acted as helmsman, with a paddle for the rudder. The situation of Kingston is very pretty, but the country round it is very stony; and there is a great swamp at the east end of the town, between Fort Henry and the town itself. Some of the old ships of war at that time lay rotting in the harbor, having been there ever since the peace in 1815. Fort Henry is the second strongest fortification in Canada, and is worth going to see. The fortifications are very handsome, and the view from the parapet is beautiful, as the Lake of the Thousand Isles begins below Kingston. Toronto at this time was quite a small place, but there were a number of pretty cottages and villas. It still well deserved the name of muddy little York, and indeed there was one particular hole just at the corner of King and Yonge street, which was well known, and at that time was full of dirty water with a green scum on the top, and there was a little sluggish creek creeping through the town pretty much of the same complexion. I was present at a meeting of a "Shakespeare Club," and heard a debate on public and private education. One of the Messrs. Galt, I don't remember which, supported public education in a very able manner. On the 27th May I sailed in the neat little steamer *Canada* for Niagara. The drive from Niagara to the Falls is very pretty; the chesnut and walnut trees on the roadside are so luxuriant and widespreading, and handsome old houses and orchards on both sides of the road, and even now it is preferable I think to the river. I got to the hotel at the Falls about four in the afternoon, and went straight down to the Table Rock. I must say that the

romance of the scene is sadly destroyed since these days; you could stroll up the river and down through the woods then without encountering cabmen, either black or white, and there were no ladies and gentlemen in ball dresses driving about with parasols and white kid gloves. There was a pretty arbor on the bank about a quarter of a mile from the hotel, where I sat and admired the whole scene, and I think the only houses near the Falls were the museum and the boatman's house. There was an old mill just on the rapids above the Table Rock, where there was a fine view of the rapids, and a very wild scene it is. The water is a bright light green, and glides along so swiftly that it dazzles your eyes, and here and there it meets a rock and flashes up in the air, scattering the spray all round. I will always maintain that the best view of the Falls is from the little ferry-boat as you cross the river below them. Here you feel their grandeur and immensity, and a sense of awe impresses you when you look steadily up to the centre of the great Horse Shoe Fall. The Falls have been so often described that it would be useless to give any fresh attempt on the same subject; however, as I believe the view from behind the Horse-shoe Falls is now almost destroyed, I may mention that. The distance from the entrance was, as well as I can remember, 153 feet to the termination rock. The only unpleasant part of the adventure was the entrance, as there was generally a little tempest of wind and spray; but as visitors were clothed in oil-skin dresses, with a good sou'-wester on their heads, it was nothing very terrible after all. I made my visit in company with three American gentlemen. The guide (a boy about fourteen years of age), took my hand, and I followed him, keeping my head down till I got through the stormy entrance, after which it was comparatively calm, and at the termination rock you could look up, and certainly it was a wonderful sight. You could see the edge of the cliff projecting over your head, and the great unbroken dark green sheet of water gliding over, and falling below your feet in an unbroken cloud. The pathway was composed of rocks and round stones sloping down to the water, and the only really frightful place was to the right of the termination, where nothing was to be seen but water. The roar was continuous, but I could converse with the lad by putting my mouth close to his ear. Ladies used to make the visit, and the celebrated Miss Fanny Kemble the actress, now Mrs. Butler, had been there only a few days before. There was a Register House, where the names of those who had gone to the termination rock were recorded. But I was amused when the man told me to wait a moment after the American gentlemen left. The fact was, two of them lost heart and did not pass the entrance; but the Registrar had two books, one in which the names of all those who went even to the entrance were recorded, and the other, which was in a secret deposit in his table, contained the names of those who had gone to the Termination Rock. Since then Table Rock is gone, and the Horse-shoe Fall so changed by the falling in of the edge on the side adjoining Table Rock, that I believe there is little attraction to draw one behind the sheet of water. Rightly to appreciate the Falls, one should stay two days at least.

On the way back to Niagara I stopped to see Brock's Monument. The view from the top was very singular, as the forest seemed almost unbroken. A man who was working in the fields, with whom I had a chat, said he had dug up a cap, coat and spurs the year before, and that they often came across bones. There was then an old square fort at Niagara, but falling to ruins; it was an earth work, and there was one of the same kind at Prescott, showing that that is not a new style of fortification. I believe they were made of logs, with the doors, windows, &c., facing into the square, and then banked up outside and above with earth. From Niagara I went across the country by Queenston and St. Catherines to Hamilton—the latter part of

the road was awf'. but the only other passenger, a fine old English gentleman, was so chee: ul and agreeable that it made the time pass easier than it would otherwise have done.

In 1834 Hamilton was quite a small town, and there had been a fire in the main street, and the ruins were still standing. Burleigh's Hotel was the best at that time. Burleigh himself was from the States, as indeed almost all the hotel-keepers in Canada seemed to be. The corner of John and King Streets was occupied by a neat little cottage, with a garden in front and a large orchard adjoining, and there were not a dozen houses between that and the lake. The chief store was Messrs. C. & J. Ferrie's—a one-story frame house not far from Burleigh's Hotel—and the only public building of any pretension was the Court House. I don't think Hamilton was as large as Fergus is now, and was much scattered. There was nothing very inviting about it, and the road to the lake was very bad, and there was great trouble in summer for want of water. After a good deal of hunting through the town I found out that the late Hon. Adam Fergusson lived about seven miles out of town, at a place called Waterdown, so I hired a good horse at a livery stable and rode out to the place. After a pleasant ride through a very pretty country, which is not much changed even now, I found Mr. Fergusson and his family at Waterdown, and astonished him not a little at my arrival. The house at Woodhill was just being built by our old friend the late Mr. Charles Allan. On our way to see it, Mr. Fergusson told me to look over a fence, and there lay a big black snake, which I think he said he had killed that morning, and he told me that there were rattlesnakes on the bank behind his new house. I mentioned my intention of going to see Fergus, and perhaps settle there after a trip to Scotland. The next day I walked out to Waterdown, and spent a pleasant day with my friends. Returning in the evening I heard a splendid concert from the frogs at the head of the lake, where the old bridge over the Desjardin's Canal was. This is the only place I ever saw the large bull frogs; and a friend who had been at Mr. Fergusson's, and myself, stopped quite quiet on the bridge to inspect them. Their throats appeared to have a big bag, which was distended every time they made their roar. Then there were the twanging and whistling fellows in full chorus, and one or two whip-poor-wills joined in, so that there was an agreeable variety of performers.

Next day I started in the stage (a common lumber waggon) for Guelph, and an awful shaking we got. One of the passengers put a bottle of whiskey in the pocket of his swallow-tail coat, but alas it was smashed before we had gone a mile. There was an English gentleman—who afterwards settled near Guelph—in the stage, and when we got a mile or two out of Dundas he and I resolved to walk. The woods looked so high and dismal that we each hunted up a good big staff in case of meeting a bear. The travelling through the pine woods then was bump against a stump or the big roots, and then thump into a hole, with a pleasing variety of little steep gravel and sandy knolls now and then, especially after getting into Puslinch. I never travelled that road in a waggon again, except once, and then it was because I had cut my foot, so I could not help it. The crossways too were numerous and bad. We dined at Patterson's Inn, on the great Canadian standard dish—ham and eggs. After leaving the old "Red House," there was not a decent looking house till we got close to Guelph, which we reached about seven in the evening, and I went to the "British Coffee House," kept by Patrick Keating. At this time Mr. Rowland Wingfield, a young English gentleman, was canvassing the county as a candidate for Parliamentary honors, and kept open house in Morgan's "Suffolk Hotel." Mr. Wingfield was the first importer of thorough-bred cattle into the County of Wellington; but either through his election expenses or some other cause, he did not

prosper. and sold out, as far as I remember, to Mr. Howitt. His stock, implements, &c., arrived at Quebec when I lived there, and their arrival was quite an event. He imported short-horned cattle, Leicester sheep, and I think Berkshire hogs.

The stump of the first tree that had been felled in the bounds of Guelph was then standing, and was reverently fenced in. The most conspicuous house in Guelph was the "Priory"—I suppose called after Mr. Prior, agent for the Canada Company in Guelph, and is now occupied by Mr. David Allan. There had been a fire in Guelph, too, and the blackened ruins were still standing.

I started on the morning of the 4th of June, about 9 o'clock, on my way to Fergus, but I soon found that very few folks knew of such a place at all. The road I travelled by was the Eramosa road, and the first clearance I struck in the Township of Nichol was Mr. Dow's, having turned off at what was called the Strickland bridge road, I did not find out the names of the places till afterwards, when I recognized the people themselves. Mrs Thos. Dow then was my first Nichol acquaintance, and she recommended me to follow a certain blaze; well I began looking for all the scorched trees I could see, and there were plenty of them, and of course I very soon went astray. The next house I made enquiries at was old Mr. Flewwelling's; this was the oldest clearance in Nichol, except Mr. Gilkison's at Elora, where Mr. Geddes now lives. From Mr. Flewwelling's I got some way or another to Mr. Creighton's, now in possession of James Davidson. By this time it was raining fast, and I got the loan of an umbrella from Mr. Alex. McDonald, I believe, and made a fresh start. I next called at an Irishman's house, who gave me a fine drink of milk, and he like a good fellow came with me a bit of the road, and the next house I got to was Mr. John Munro's, who was working at his house. Then I got to Mr. Cormie's, at that time occupied by Mr. John Wilkie, and they pressed me to come in, and I got a comfortable dinner of scones and tea, and my coat dried at the fire. Mrs. Wilkie told me that that very morning a neighbor had got a fine sow carried off by a bear, which was not very pleasant news; however, I always carried a good long staff. After leaving this, I got to Mr. Rose's in Garafraxa, and he advised me to stay with him all night, but I declined, as I was determined to get to Fergus, or as I found it was better known as the "Little Falls," Elora being the "Big Falls." After leaving Mr. Rose's, I got safely to a little clearing known as "Wintermate's," just opposite Mr. Wilson's house, but here was the river and no bridge. I then made up my mind to follow the track till about sunset, and if I could not find the bridge at Fergus, to come back and wade over to the house close to Mr. Wilson's, where Wintermate then lived. Having walked, as I found out afterwards, nearly to Elora, and finding no bridge, I returned and waded the river to Wintermate's house. I was told it was about half a mile to Mr. Webster's house, which was "Fergus." A young man who was in the house came a little piece of the road with me, and after a fine tumble in the mud I at last got to a little house with a light or two visible in the windows, and after asking if this was Fergus; and having ascertained that such was the fact, was ushered into the presence of Mr. James Webster and the late Mr. Buist, who was in bed with a comfortable Kilmarnock nightcap on his head. Having just waded the river, and then tumbled in the black mud, I was decidedly rather a queer specimen of a new settler. However, after stripping off my own garments, and being comfortably clad in a suit of Mr. Webster's (decidedly an easy fit), I got a good supper, and, I must say it, a most refreshing tumbler of brandy toddy, and turned into bed with the good old Provost; most thankful for having got safe to Fergus.

Fergus at that time consisted of a clearance of about ten acres chopped;

but not logged up. There were two inhabited houses, one belonging to Mr. Scott, in which Mr. Webster lodged, which was situated as near as possible where Mr Dickson's house and shop now are, and the other at Mr. Creighton's store. The house now occupied by Mr. Peter McLaren was being roofed in, and was the first house occupied by Mr. Webster, and better known afterwards as the "Cleikum." The only land under cultivation was Mr. Buist's garden on the little creek at the end of Mr. Mill's butcher's shop, and was I daresay at least sixteen feet square. Mr. Scott was known as the "Contractor," and built the first bridge at the same place where the Tower Street Bridge now is. It was a queer looking structure, but stood out wonderfully. Scott's "monkey," a machine which he invented to pull out stumps, was long celebrated. It was like the big wheel of an old-fashioned spinning wheel. and just about as well adapted for pulling out stumps as a spinning wheel would be. Such was Fergus when I first saw it. Between Hamilton and Scott's house there was not ten miles of road cut out a chain wide, and not two miles without a crossway; and beyond Fergus to the North all was an unbroken wilderness of woods. The change since then has been wonderful, and in many respects, to an old settler, melancholy; but believing that all under a good Providence is for the best, I now conclude by hoping that Fergus may flourish, and that the country may advance rapidly, not only in material prosperity, but in the sound and enduring principles of piety and morality, which are the only firm foundations of prosperity in any land.

FERGUS, March, 1864.

THE FERGUS SETTLEMENT

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

On the 5th of June, 1834, the day after my arrival at Fergus for the first time, Mr. Webster and myself took a walk down the river to Elora. This place was purchased by the late Mr. William Gilkison, formerly of Glasgow, and a friend of the late Mr. John Galt the novelist, and at one time agent for the Canada Company. It was doubtless called Elora after the celebrated caves of Elora near Bombay in the East Indies; and indeed there are a number of pretty little caves in the banks both of the Grand River and the Irvine. The house at present occupied by Mr. Geddes was the first log-house built in the Township of Nichol, and in 1834 was occupied by Mr. David Gilkison as a house, and there was a store in one end. There was also a saw-mill, a blacksmith's shop, and a log tavern kept by Mr. George Gray, so that Elora had quite the start of the embryo city of Fergus. The views in those days all about the river banks were beautiful, but the improvements since made have done away with all the romance and wildness of both places, and the Indian, the wolf, and the deer are rarely seen.

On our way to Elora we met Mr. Gilkison, who was superintending the cutting out of the road somewhere near old John Mason's farm, having got a government grant of I think twenty-five pounds, which was looked upon as a very handsome gift in those days. I made a purchase of two lots this day, now the property of Mr. Allardice, and on the 6th bought the place where I now live. Except the late Mr. Buist, I was the first to buy a lot in the Fergus settlement, and many a time since I thought it was a very crazy speculation. We tried fishing this evening at the bridge, and caught a lot of chubs and crawfish, but were desperately bitten by black flies and mosquitoes. We unanimously agreed that Mr. Buist should be styled "Provost," and he bore the name during the whole time of his residence here. He is gone now. He was an honest, kind hearted, social old gentleman—a good farmer, very persevering and industrious—and although he was in some respects a little hasty and prejudiced, yet I don't suppose he left an enemy in the country.

On the 8th of June Mr. Webster and myself started for Guelph by way of Elora. Mr. Webster had a nice poney, and we followed the ride-and-tie system, a system which would do very well in a new country, but I rather doubt the poney in these days of 1865 would have been found missing if such a plan was to be tried now. We breakfasted at Elora, and indeed saw the trout caught that formed the best part of our breakfast. The trout fishing in those days, and for many years after, at Elora, was very good indeed; but now alas improvements—that is sawdust, meal sids, dye water and other nuisances—have driven away the trout, and none but most determined sportsmen think of trying the "Grand River below Elora," as it used to be for a day's fishing. Here I must say that drinking habits, though bad enough yet, were far more universal then, and the last thing I

heard before falling asleep was the c..tter of the glasses. The Sunday, too, was little respected; indeed, bad as Quebec was in my eyes, Guelph in 1834 was a great deal worse.

Next day I bid Mr. Webster farewell, and started on foot for Hamilton; breakfasted at Patersons's (where Freel's Inn now is) on the unfailing standard, ham and eggs; dined at Dundas on salt mackerel and potatoes, and got to Hamilton at five in the afternoon. I returned to Quebec by the St. Lawrence. On the 10th I took an early start to Waterdown, and breakfasted with my kind old friend the late Mr. Fergusson, and in the afternoon went by the steamer *Queenston* to Toronto, where we arrived safe after grounding in the mud in the bay twice, but quite in a soft and pleasant manner. The "British Coffee House" was then I believe the best hotel in Toronto, and here I put up for the night, but about twelve I was awakened by a gentleman informing me that was his bed. After arguing the question in a pleasant and easy way, I was left in possession. Next day I embarked on the fine steamer *St. George* for Prescott. We sailed by daylight through the beautiful lake of the Thousand Isles, and after all I have seen in Canada I think this is the most beautiful scenery, and most likely to remain so. Many of the Islands are so small, and the wood of so little value, that they are left uncleared, and the clearings on the larger islands give variety to the scenery, and as the steamer keeps winding about the islands one never tires. Every now and then you are puzzled to think which way you are to go, and as you get almost close to what seemed the end of the channel, some new and beautiful opening appears, and then there are pretty glimpses of villages, with the church spires in the distant mainland. The approach to Brockville is very pretty, and its situation is beautiful, and I think it is one of the prettiest towns in Upper Canada. We went to Prescott, which was as far as the large steamers went in those days. Here there was a steamer just launched, which was to go down the rapids to Lachine, a deed which no steamer had then accomplished, except one. The new boat had only one wheel, and the helm in the middle of the boat.

On the 13th started in the *Brockville*, and had a pretty sail down the river to Dickenson's Landing; then went by stage to Cornwall; then got on board another steamer, the *Neptune*, on Lake St. Frances, and sailed to Coteau du Lac; took the stage again to Cascades, then embarked on Lac St. Louis in the *Henry Brougham*, and got to Lachine, going nearly sixteen miles an hour, and finally took the stage to Montreal, and got safe to Mr. Asa Goodenough's Hotel, at that time the best in the city. The change from steamer to stage, and stage to steamer, was a little troublesome; but in fine weather and with a light carpet bag, one enjoyed it very much, and there was more fun and excitement then than in the present luxurious manner of embarking at Hamilton and getting in the same boat to Montreal without a change; and then you saw a good deal more of the country, and the drive along the river bank was much more interesting than sailing on the river itself. The stage coach from Lachine had six horses; and we entered the city in great style, and the way in which the coachman guided his six horses through the old fashioned streets of Montreal was wonderful, and finally turned in by an arch into the court yard before the hotel door, shewing a degree of coachmanship rarely excelled by the best old country whip.

After a prosperous voyage to Britain, and a pleasant visit to friends in the old country, I again left Scotland in the good ship *Canada* (James Allan, captain, and Bryce Allan, mate), and after a long cold voyage got to Quebec on the 15th May, and found the snow still lying in sheltered places.

On the 3rd of June I was once more in Guelph, and on the 4th some five of us started on foot for Fergus by way of Elora, and after a weary walk through mud in many places from six to eighteen inches deep we got to

Fergus about four in the afternoon, and put up at the tavern kept by the late Mr. Hugh Black, formerly of Deanston, Perthshire, Scotland. The tavern, or "Black's Tavern," was a two-story log-house, situated where the large hotel occupied by Mr. Whyte now stands. There was one large room in it, one small parlor, the bar-room, and a kitchen behind on the ground floor, and bed-rooms above. Besides Mr. Black's family there were some thirty boarders in the house, which was literally crammed, and the bar-room was scarcely ever empty. While the weather was fine the house was pretty quiet and orderly, but a wet day was a misfortune, as the men being off work they gathered in the bar, and it was a steady system of *horning* till night. There was a celebrated character known as the Major, a member of an old Scotch family, who sometimes kept the bar, and when such was the case there was sure to be fight, which he ther managed to bring to an amicable conclusion by a friendly glass all round, and if nobody would fight the Major would get very fired himself, but took good care never to get hurt. He was a dangerous associate for idle young men. There can be no greater mistake than young men given to dissipation of any kind coming to Canada to improve, as from what I have seen all restraint is thrown off. There are no parents or sisters to be afraid of, and when a poor youth meets with idle loafers like the Major, his good resolutions are forgotten, and he ends—as so many have done in Canada—by drinking to excess, and in a few years going to destruction. An extra St. Andrew's Society dinner was got up, and a very good humored and agreeable party it was till the end, when, as was often the case, the influence of Canadian *nectar* prevailed, or, as they say in Scotland, the "maut got abune the meal," and the company got rather riotous. The Fergus St. Andrew's Society was first formed on the 30th November, 1834, and I am happy to say still exists, though not in a very robust state. Our nearest Post Office was Guelph, and Mr. Black's waggon generally brought the letters about once a week. Letters in those days came from Britain by way of Halifax, and were generally about two months old before we got them, and postage was very high—2s 4d a letter. An old settler in Nichol, a native of Halifax, told me that he remembered when the first mail from there was sent to Quebec, said mail consisting of one letter, and there were two carriers, as they carried the mail bags on their backs. They walked most of the way both summer and winter, and one of the winters when I was in Quebec, the carrier fell into lake Temiscouta, but was saved. The letters had to be all thawed and dried before delivery. I think at another time there was only one carrier, and he took very sick and hung the mail bags on a tree, and if I am not mistaken he was found dead at the foot of the tree. We got our Post Office established in 1836, and *Mr.* Thomas Young was our first Postmaster, and Mr. McQueen, his successor in 1837, has continued in that situation ever since, with much credit to himself and his able assistants, and to the satisfaction of the community at large. A store was opened towards the end of summer, where *Mr.* John Watt has his present store. The first storekeeper was *Mr.* Thos. Young, a very obliging and enterprising person, and, considering the great expense and trouble of getting goods in those days, kept as good an assortment of goods as can be had even now, and sold upon as reasonable terms. He was succeeded after some two years by Messrs. Watt & McGladery, and then by Mr. John Watt, who still flourishes in the old original mart of commerce, and whose premises now contain a telegraph office, from whence you may send messages over half of the world, and, if the submarine telegraph between Britain and America should prove successful, over the whole world. If you step up stairs you can get *done* on the most moderate terms in the photographic gallery, and again descending you can enter the law office on the premises and make your will, or if you feel bilious commence a law suit, pro-

vided at the same time you have something to invest in the way of fees. The late Mr. Charles Allan was chief architect, and built houses, barns, &c., for all who wished them. His house was the third or fourth put up in the village, and still stands opposite Mr. McLaren's, which was well known as the "Cleikum," where Mr. Webster and Mr. Buist lived for several years. Mr. Walker the baker (who I am happy to say is still a respected inhabitant of Fergus), commenced his bakery this year (1835), but did not do much till the year following. I am sure many of the old settlers will never forget Mr. Walker's kindness and patience in furnishing bread when wheat was a failure, and money a thing that was heard of now and then, but very seldom seen. The first grist mill was completed this autumn and opened in great state by a ball and supper in winter, and I am sure it was one of the merriest and funniest frolics ever I witnessed. The first grist for the Fergus mills was furnished from Mr. Buist's farm. Mr. Buist reaped his first crop of wheat in the autumn of 1835, and although there was some frost as usual in August, it was a good crop and was all sold for seed to the new settlers. I think in 1835 there were six horses or perhaps eight altogether in the township of Nichol, and cows and oxen were very scarce. As to religious observances there was no work done on the Sunday, and we frequently had service in Black's big room as it was called, but I don't think the Sunday was, to say the least, very strictly observed. The Church, however, was finished this summer and we had a visit from the late Rev. Mr. Gale of Hamilton, who was the first ordained minister that preached in Fergus. He paid us a visit in our parlour at Black's tavern, and I am sure we were glad to see him, and really felt it was something home-like to see a respectable Scotch minister again. Mr. Gale was a very pleasant, agreeable gentleman as well as a pious and devoted minister, and always had a warm feeling to Fergus till the time of his death. The late Mrs. Fergusson, too, took a great interest in the wellfare of Fergus, and I believe it was as much through her good influence as her husband's, that the church and school house were first erected in the village. We had sermons also from the late Dr. Bayne, and Mr. Bell, Mr. Fergusson's tutor. Winter was the worst time, as we very seldom had preaching of any kind, and by that time most of the young men who had bought farms had taken up bachelor hall for themselves. In 1837, however, the Rev. Mr. Gardiner was ordained clergyman and inducted in February, I think, as minister of St. Andrew's Church, Fergus. Numerous bees took place for raising houses during the year; and I think I was at eleven or twelve. Bees are almost a necessity in a new settlement, and brought people together and made them acquainted with one another and neighbourly. But I must honestly confess there was too much whiskey consumed, the effects of which were not always pleasant—although very few accidents took place. At the raising of the mill, I think, there were some eighty men present. The end of 1835 and the beginning of 1836 was very cold. The snow was between three and four feet deep in the woods, and the thermometer was 30° below zero. We used frequently to hear the wolves in pursuit of the deer; and two or three times got parts of the deer which they had been unable to devour. The sound of the wolves in pursuit is a good deal like that of a pack of fox-hounds, only more melancholy, and more like a howl. They are very seldom seen, and I never saw more than three—and all single ones. We often saw deer, and one day a party of us saw some four or five cross the Grand River, near where Mr. James Wilson's house now is, in a string—which was a pretty sight. They are easily tamed, if taken young—but get very troublesome. We had several turtle feasts. The mud turtle is by no means a pretty creature, but the eggs are very good, and parts of the body also. One was got in the beaver meadow behind St. Andrew's Church, and two or

three in the river. Several porcupines were killed. The porcupine is very good eating, very like a rabbit, and we had a fine dish of it once at Mr. J. Webster's, where Mr. James Wilson now resides. Racoon is not bad, but is rather rich and strong tasted. I may state that during the first winter, loaf bread was very scarce and I very seldom tasted it. Mr. Drysdale and myself kept house in an old log house close to where Mr. Jas. Wilson, of Monkland Mills, resides. Although we had no bread we had potatoes, oatmeal, salmon, and lots of venison. We used to get a deer for six or seven shillings, and at one time had about sixteen hams hanging from the roof: we smoked said hams with the help of two or three flour barrels, over a small furnace dug in the ground, and used cherry chips, which made them very tasty. Everything froze in our house, and we daren't leave the door open in case the wolves should come in, although our fire-place smoked dreadfully. One day Mr. Drysdale shot a young bear, which was very good eating, very like a young pig; and a good bear ham is a very good dish. Mr. Alpoegh, of Garafraxa, used to be a great hunter in those days, and as he passed our house on the way to Fergus we got the first offer of his game. When we wished to cook our venison we put the joint in a box with holes at each end and a lid, and then put said box in the spring, the water of which never froze, and in a short time it was quite thawed and ready for the pot or bake kettle. Stoves were hardly known, and the big black pot and the bake kettle were the chief culinary instruments, not forgetting a long handled frying-pan. Either a mink or an otter found out our thawing process, and more than once walked off with our joint bodily, and I well remember a *company day* when I went to the box the joint was gone—a fine haunch it was too, and we had to wait till another one was thawed. Salt pork or salt beef were the standard provisions in the meat line, and fresh meat was very scarce for the first five or six years; and as to butchers, we had no regular traders in that line, and after sheep got more plentiful a farmer notified his neighbors, and it was portioned out as arranged. Cash was scarce after the first two or three years of the settlement, but barter did very well, except with the tax gatherer, who of course required money; however, taxes were very light in those days. After the mill was fairly started bread was more plentiful, although for the first two or three years flour was very bad, owing to the wheat being frosted and sprouted; however, scones were good and plentiful, though occasionally rather sticky. Cows soon increased in number, and milk began to abound. Oatmeal was made by Messrs. Mitchell & Gartshore (the first tenants of the mill), and cakes and porridge could be got by all who wished them. The rising generation prefer hot cakes, new bread, pickles, fat pork, &c., to the good wholesome porridge and milk which is so deservedly popular in old Scotland, and which used to form the breakfast of the youth of all classes, high and low, in that land.

The first township meeting of importance to the Fergus settlement was held on the 4th January, 1836. The late Hon. Mr. Fergusson was made chairman, and it was a most stirring and amusing scene. One great object was to get Mr. McQueen made Township Clerk, which was carried after a great deal of loud talk and fun, and that same worthy Clerk has been Clerk ever since, and I trust may long continue so. The election was held down the township, at a house then owned by a Mr. Crichton, and the Hon. Mr. Fergusson left the village early in the morning, followed by a long train of settlers, determined to advance the interests of the Fergus settlement at all risks; however, all went off pleasantly. In the same year, 1836, there was a general election, and all who had votes—numbering some eight or ten in the Fergus settlement—determined to go to Nelson to vote for Chisholm and Shade, the Conservative candidates, Hopkins and Durand being the

Reform candidates. As the road was a long one, and very bad besides, we started very early from Fergus and breakfasted at the corner in Eramosa, where Worsfold's Inn is, and after that went almost in a straight line through Nassagaweya to Nelson Village. I think it was the worst and roughest road I ever saw, and certainly it was a long journey to take to tender our votes; however, by this time politics were beginning to get very exciting, and the mutterings and growls of distant thunder were beginning to be heard, which finally terminated in the outbreak of 1837. We walked most of the way, and were very glad to get to the Inn at Nelson and get some rest and refreshment. I think our tea was hemlock tea, which although rather bitter is by no means bad. The polling was to begin on the next day, and after a wonderful deal of speechifying it did at last begin, and such a pulling and pushing there was to get up to the little polling booth (for it was just one room) I never saw since at any such occasion. There was the usual fun and joking which prevail on such occasions, and the catechising before your vote was recorded was very tiresome. When my friend Drysdale tendered his vote, one of the candidates said it was quite impossible that he could have a vote, upon which friend D. asked him if he meant to insult him, while Mr. Chisholm, a hearty old gentleman, was greatly diverted. Drysdale's lot was a clergy lot, generally sold at ten years' credit, but he had paid it up at once and got his deed, but such an event was so uncommon, and in Garafraxa too, that Mr. Durand couldn't swallow it. I was just behind and heard the fun; however, the vote was passed, and Mr. Durand was quite polite. After hearing some of the "free and independent" behind me recommend strongly that my hat (a good Edinburgh beaver) should be knocked over my eyes, and after handing said hat to a friendly looking constable, who kept the door of the polling place, and after much pulling and pushing, I got in, and was also strictly catechised. After satisfying Mr. Durand, I was walking quietly out without giving my vote, when I was called back, and duly recorded the same for Chisholm and Shade.

With regard to educational matters, the Fergus School was opened this year under the charge of our old friend Mr. McQueen, and I may say for the period of some twenty-two years in which he conducted said school, he gave great satisfaction. and turned out as good scholars as any other teacher in this county. His emoluments were very moderate for many years, and his labours in proportion much more arduous; but he loved his profession, and turned out many a good scholar, well grounded in the three great requisites of a useful education—reading, writing and arithmetic—and several pretty good Latin scholars too. Mr. McQueen is now an eminent agriculturis , and doubtless, as he well deserves, a successful one too, as he is just as persevering in bringing clods, stumps, stones, &c., into their proper places, as he used to be with the stirring youth of Fergus and its neighbourhood.

Our first experience of statute labor was realized in 1835, when one day a whole lot of us were notified to be ready one morning at 8 a. m., to go to a certain spot to make a crossway. Well, we mustered together and marched to the pretty little stream that runs into Mr. Allardice's bush land, and there prepared to crossway said stream. We had no oxen, and so had not only to cut the timber, but to carry it out of the swamp, and for some of us it was about as tough a commencement of hard work as could well be wished for. I think the late Mr. George Skene was our pathmaster, and although we did not get on very fast, yet we did as well as we could, and under his charge laid down a very nice piece of crossway, which, for all I know, may be there yet. Our hands blistered nicely, but we just pricked the little blobs on the balsam trees, and rubbed them with that, and they healed

wonderfully. Our dinner consisted of dried deer ham, which old Mr. Black provided, with bread, scones and grog. Talking of statute labor, it was very much required, as the plain truth was we had no real road between Fergus and Hamilton. In many places in Puslinch and East Flamboro the road or track was as bad or worse than the roads near Fergus. Mr. Webster and I went to the Guelph May Fair in 1836, and one place we came to was in such a state from overflow of water that we took off our shoes and stockings and waded; and indeed for many years after, riding was the most pleasant way of travelling, and next walking, except in winter. I am not sure when the Guelph Fairs were first commenced, but the May and November Fairs were in full activity in 1836, and were always looked upon as special occasions of jollification, and even now these two particular ones are considered of more importance than the other monthly markets. There used generally to be a fight in old times, and it was only in 1842 or 1843 that the regular engagement was put an end to. The show of animals in 1836, with a few exceptions, was miserable. A lot of poor little lean beasties represented the cattle in general, and the hogs were the genuine alligator and chipmonk breeds. Sheep there were almost none, or very few. There were a few good horses from Waterloo. The change now is indeed wonderful, and when one thinks of the little old shed called a market house, and queer collection of animals gathered round it in 1836, and takes a look at the Town Hall now, and the splendid show of beef, mutton, &c., both on foot and in the market stalls on a fair day, he cannot but wonder at the advance of the country. For many years money was very scarce, and barter was the rule, and many a queer turn was made. A man might have flocks, and herds, and grain to a very respectable amount in value, but how to convert it into cash was the difficulty. I always made it a rule to provide for the minister, the tax gatherer, and the washerwoman in cash, and all other accounts were, if possible, settled by trade, and many a time it was a difficult job to raise a penny to put in the Church plate on Sunday.

We had a very good Rifle Company, consisting of some twenty-five or thirty young men, and were well drilled by an old sergeant well known as George Mathews. Our first drill ground was the beaver meadow behind St. Andrew's Church, and when we got pretty well advanced in light infantry practice we used to run down to take the village, firing and dodging behind the stumps, and by the time we got to old Black's we were pretty well blown. We got no help from Government in any shape, and when called out in 1837 they thought it a great thing to furnish old Tower muskets that required your three fingers to pull the trigger, and carried a ball that might go sixty yards on an occasion, and which required flints about one by one and a-half inches big. Now-a-days a volunteer must have his uniform, great coat, his rifle, his half dollar a day, and must be drilled in a house, and when called out to act as policeman gets full rations and one dollar a day. Government also furnishes picked men from the crack regiments of the line as instructors, and pays them, while we paid honest George Mathews ourselves. As I have mentioned 1837, I may as well state that after the rebellion broke out in Lower Canada at the instigation of L. J Papineau, Wolfred Nelson and many others, it broke out in Upper Canada under the leadership of the late W. L. McKenzie, and early in December word was sent to Fergus that the volunteer company must turn out. We got our orders on the Friday and started on the Sunday after for Guelph. We first marched to church and got an address from Mr. Gardiner, our minister, who felt much interested in us, and was a right loyal subject, as well as a good minister. After staying a short time at Guelph, we were ordered to Galt, where we kept guard at night for some three weeks, and on one occasion six of us (of whom I was one), and a lot of special constables, were sent out to catch rebels, or sympa-

thisers as they were called. One half of our little company were marched off about Christmas to Drummondville, and the other half under my charge followed, and arrived there the very day before the Caroline was sent over the Falls. One of the first people I met in Chippawa was an old Edinburgh Academy boy, who told me there was to be something stirring that night, and that he was going on secret boat service, and in fact he was one of the volunteers in the cutting out business. We were very poorly treated at Drummondville—did not get enough to eat, and hardly room to sleep. The Guelph company and our company were formed into one, and we worked very pleasantly together. Our food was *scaldings* (the juice in which pork is boiled), and pork and bread for breakfast, and pork and bread scaldings for dinner. Our old friend Mr. Walker, the baker, went down to the ferry landing below the Falls and got some fragments of the Caroline, with which we helped the fire, and boiled the only dish of potatoes I partook of at the lines. We went on the 30th December to poor Captain Usher's house, and lived two days in a cellar kitchen. The house was immediately opposite Navy Island. It was a pretty cottage—frame above, and stone cellar and kitchen. Two round shot were sent through it one of the days we were on duty, and three of us saw them go through the frame as we were in a neighbouring field. We saw *in* the New Year, 1st January, 1838, in Usher's house, about as dismal a New Year's morning as ever I saw. The weather was quite mild, and the ground was like pea soup wherever there was a road. After this we went up the river, and were quartered in a good honest German's house, and here we lived pretty well, that is to say the pork was good and the bread excellent, and we got lots of apples very cheap, and we were out of reach of Navy Island. Our bed was the floor, with an armful of hay for mattress, and our bit blanket (the only clothing ever I got except a haversack from government) was our bedding. I kept my blanket for a long time, and the last I saw of it was acting as *ironing blanket*. As there seemed no chance of anything being done, three of us started home after duly notifying Sergeant Mathews, and we walked in three days to Hamilton, and then like Jeanie Deans, "whiles walkin' and whiles gettin' a lift," we got back to Fergus about the middle or end of January. It would take too much time to relate all the incidents that occurred. For my own part I think Sir Francis Head showed a noble and generous spirit, and took the best means for bringing matters to a crisis. The storm came on, and at last the political atmosphere was cleared. The life of W. L. McKenzie shows how sorry *he* was for the part he took in the business. He was a clever man, but hasty and fiery in temper, and he was much misled by some of his more cowardly and cunning associates. But Papineau was a coward and a traitor at heart, and although he is now an old man, and living in his own home in Lower Canada, instead of being hanged, as he well deserved to be, he is not to be trusted, and has little affection for either our Queen or the British people. After some years politics took a queer turn, and the fellows we went out to shoot turned out to be all right, and of course *we* all wrong. Such is life.

With regard to the climate of Canada a great deal has been said and written. After about thirty-five years' experience of it I must say that I see very little difference. The longest winter was the winter of 1842 and 1843; the severest I think that of 1855 and 1856. We have more drought now, and feel the wind much more, and undoubtedly the clearing of the country has dried up many of the smaller streams. Summer frosts are still frequent, and do much injury even in old clearings. My house, in which I live at present, was built in 1836, and was the first stone house built in the North Riding, and one of the first in the County. It is but a cottage, but at the time it was built was regarded as something wonderful. We all went through the apprenticeship of chopping, logging, burning, railsplitting, fencing, mowing,

reaping, cradling, raking and binding, and a good apprenticeship it is, although now rather out of fashion among the youth of the land. I will conclude with "The Chopper's Song," written some years ago:

THE CHOPPER'S SONG.

The sun shines bright on the sparkling snow,
The cattle are fed, to the woods we'll go;
We'll lower the pride of yon maple tall
Ere the rays of the sun on the noon-mark fall.

Then away we go with our axes bright,
Which glance in the sun like the diamond bright,
And soon there is heard 'neath the forest wide
The sound of the axe as we notch its side.

Such music is sweet to the settler's ear,
As the crack of the axe rings firm and clear,
And the chips fly fast, and the blood runs warm,
As with skilful vigor we ply the arm.

Stand clear—it goes! no, one more stroke,
And the heart of the noble tree is broke;
With a long loud groan, and a thundering roar,
'Midst the scattering snow lies the monarch hoar.

What a beautiful tree! almost two feet through,
Hurrah for the men of the axe and the plough!
Oh! give us but peace 'neath our own loved Queen,
And we'll soon make the forest a garden I ween.

Fergus, 1865.

EARLY DAYS OF FERGUS.

Of course in a new settlement the first great ends to be attained were to get houses, barns and clearances, so for some years agriculture in its higher branches did not attract much attention. If a settler had a good yoke of working oxen and a cow, with two or three pigs, he was pretty well off, and was not very particular as to the breed. I think the favorite cattle in old times were the red cattle, which were generally hardy, and the cows pretty good milkers, and their origin I have little doubt was French, having come from Lower Canada or the French settlements in the West. Black cattle were much more common than they are now, and were generally hardy animals too. Mr. Rowland Wingfield, a young gentleman from Gloucestershire, England, who settled near Guelph, was the first importer of superior cattle and sheep to this County. Mr. Howitt bought his place and his stock too I believe, and being a good farmer himself improved the stock about Guelph very much. Mr. Wingfield started as candidate for the honor of M. P. P.. and thereby involved himself in trouble, and lost his election besides. The cattle he imported were short-horn or Durham, and some Southdown and Leicester sheep. Then our old friend the late Hon. Mr. Fergusson imported some thorough-bred stock, and a fine young bull was sent to one of his sons then residing near Fergus. He also had some Leicester sheep, and sent me a present of a fine ram. Previous to this I had bought a pretty good Southdown ram, and had a nice little flock of sheep. I then killed the Southdown in summer, and crossed with Mr. Fergusson's present, and found it did very well. The wool of the Southdown sheep is much finer than the Leicester, but not so long, so the cross made very good wool. The mutton of the Southdown is also much better than the pure Leicester, which is coarse and fat, and the cross in this respect was an improvement. I don't know who imported well-bred hogs to Guelph, but I bought a very good sow, mostly Berkshire, and succeeded very well. The Berkshire pigs are kindly beasts, good tempered, and eat grass like sheep (not rooting it up), and fatten very easily. I had three young fellows once that would follow me and eat out of my hand. There were always good horses hereabouts, as our neighbours in Waterloo had pretty good horses indeed; that was the only stock that they had that was good. As for grain, the new settlers sowed a great deal of fall wheat for a few years, till it was found so uncertain a crop that spring wheat took its place, and the growing of fall wheat was almost abandoned. Oats were almost always good, and when cut pretty green make excellent fodder, and I have often wondered that farmers stuck so tenaciously to wheat. I am sure that in new bush farms it would be far better to get a good crop of oats than run the certainty almost of getting frosted or rusty wheat. There was very little encouragement in old times to grow either barley or rye, so they were never much cultivated. Potatoes have always been a pretty good crop hereabouts, except in the year 1848, when there was a general failure. The favorite kinds were pink-eyes, shannocks and cups, and I don't think three better kinds have been found yet for all purposes. Turnips were not much cultivated, as they were not much required. I used always to grow a few for my sheep. As to fat cattle, which are now so important a branch of

agriculture, the cattle generally pastured in the woods, and by the time the grain was cut were in pretty fair order, and by feeding the ones destined for the butcher, or rather for the knife, with some chopped oats for two or three weeks they were good beef. We had no market nearer than Guelph for some years, and it was a very poor one, and by the time a poor beast finished the journey from here it had a dirty, draggled, wearied appearance very little in its favor. After a few years we had a better market in the wants of the new settlers to the North and West of us. The first agricultural society in this part of Canada was the Gore District Agricultural Society, and I was present at an annual meeting in 1835, which was held at Dundas. It had not many members in this quarter, but I don't think there was any other society till 1842, or about that time, when we were formed into the District of Wellington. From 1838 to 1840 the whole of Canada I may say was very dull, and confidence had been so sadly shaken by the rebellion of 1837, and the minor outbreaks after, that emigration was almost stopped, and there was an unpleasant feeling in the country altogether. The summer of 1838 was one of the warmest and driest we have had since the commencement of Fergus. The bank of the river took fire, and from the Tower Street bridge it smouldered and burnt us far up as opposite what is now Mr. James Wilson's house, and being of a peatty nature it was impossible to extinguish it, The timber, mostly hemlock, cedar and birch, along the whole front of my lot (some thirty-three chains wide—was set fire to at once, and was, I daresay, the first blaze ever seen hereabouts; however, no harm was done, although my good old neighbour the Provost was in great agitation, and was seen now and then on guard before his house, and complained to some of our neighbors that that "scoonrel Ferrier wanted to burn him oot—hoose, barn, fences and a'." The late Mr. Fergusson and family lived in the village this summer, and I can remember the old gentleman watching the bridge to prevent its catching fire, having taken it specially under his charge. He was instructed to form a new militia regiment up here, so a good many of our old Fergus Rifle Company were appointed officers in the 13th Gore, and Colonel Fergusson, after the appointments were made, gave us a very handsome entertainment in what was then "Webster's new store," which was just then built, and was very tastefully ornamented for the occasion. It was a very pleasant party, and such a gathering of officers as no Colonel had reason to be ashamed of. The Fergus Curling Club was also organized this year, and I am happy to say is a flourishing institution still. With regard to curling as a game, as I was quite a lad when I left Edinburgh, skating was the winter amusement which was preferred by the boys, and I looked upon curling as a very good respectable sort of amusement for ministers, teachers, and middle aged gentlemen, and indeed I had seen the learned professor of logic and metaphysics in the Edinburgh University—a fine tall handsome man he was,—the Rector of the Edinburgh Academy, a jolly round made man well known as "Punch," and many other men of weight and high standing, both physically and morally, all busy curling away on Duddingstone Loch near Edinburgh. So when I heard of the curling here I skated down the river or took a walk on snow shoes to see the fun, and to be honest I thought it a very dull stupid game. However, as it was impossible to get any place to skate I at last gave it up, and when the curling club was formed I joined it, and soon became a keen curler. The two great chieftains of the game were old Mr. Black and the "Provost," Mr. Buist, and as they almost always played on opposite sides there was a keen rivalry between them. Mr. Black was a tall handsome man, and very often wore a red nightcap and red overstockings, and of an afternoon when it began to look a little dark, he looked as like some of the fine pictures of an Italian bandit as any one could wish. The Provost was a little stout built man, but a strong player, and very

steady. As they both talked excellent broad Scotch, the game as far as language went was most correct, and the way the two leaders joked one another was a treat. Mr. Black would cry out, "Noo, Provost, ye'r sooping afore the tee." "Na, na, Mr. Black." "Haud up your broom, sir." "Hoots, man, be canny." "If ye dinna tak' yer leg awa' frae that, sir, I'll ca' ye ow'r wi' the broom." "Get oot the road, Mr. Black," and so on they went till I thought there would be a fight sometimes, but there was little chance of that, for I am persuaded the two old gentlemen (and they were gentlemen) thought there were not two better fellows than themselves, or better players either, and I daresay it would not have been easy to find their match at that time at the grand game o' curlin'. As both stones of the right kind and cash to shape them properly were scarce in those old times, the late Mr. Perry, a keen curler, and a very ingenious mechanic, having been a turner in metal at the celebrated works of Mr. Smith at Deanston in Perthshire, thought that he would try good solid maple to represent curling stones, and succeeded so well that for many years there was nothing else. They used to get rather light after a year or two, and after a while Mr. Perry loaded them with lead, which kept them steadier. Now and then a poor block would get an "awfu' crack," and would actually be knocked into two or three pieces. The command would issue in a wicked tone from the skip's mouth—"red the road," which frequently ended in the way above mentioned. Although curlers are not considered a dangerous class of people, they have a secret word and sign, and have to be examined every year, and if they make the slightest mistake in giving the word or making the sign, they have to pay a fine, which goes to the general fund, and every new member has to be initiated, and pay his entrance fee. All improper language or quarrelling was strictly forbidden, and fines were imposed for swearing, and the rules used to be strictly enforced, and I hope are so still. Old Mr. Black presented the club with a pair of beautiful handles to be played for every year, and the successful player was the champion or captain of the club, and held the handles till they were won from him by some better or more fortunate player. The curling club I may say (and I am sorry for it) is the only institution of long standing in Fergus which has always flourished. There was a very good library formed in 1836 I believe, and for a while it did very well, but finally it good into a very melancholy sickly state, and would have died altogether unless Mr. Fordyce had taken it in charge and nursed it and begged for it, and punched up people in a persevering manner to aid it, and in fact infused a little life into it. After a while "The Farmers and Mechanics' Institute" was formed, and the old library was made over to it. Well, as long as we got a government grant the Institute did nicely, but when the grant was withdrawn the Institute, like the Library, got into the same weakly state, and only for the praiseworthy efforts of a few individuals would also soon expire.

Sir Francis Head was succeeded as Governor of Upper Canada by Sir George Arthur. The Lower Province was in a very unsettled state, and in truth the outburst of 1837 and 1838 almost put an end to Canadian progress. Confidence was sadly shaken, emigration was almost stopped, and very little was doing in the country at all. Fergus was at a stand still, but the clearings were extending, and the settlers were obliged to persevere, as it was impossible to sell or go away, otherwise I believe many would have done so. In 1840 the Right Honorable Poulett Thompson, a somewhat celebrated Whig statesman, was sent to Canada as Governor General for the express purpose, it was understood, of effecting a union between Upper and Lower Canada. Mr. Thompson was a very able man, and very unscrupulous, and he set about his work with great skill, perseverance and vigor. He governed the Lower Province by his Council, cut and carved as

he pleased, and worked away till he was certain of having a majority of the new Parliament of United Canada. In order to get certain gentlemen returned, both at Quebec and Montreal, he threw parts of the suburbs adverse to his friends into their respective counties, so that their votes were swamped in the counties, and he got his friends returned in the two cities. Then he wheedled the Upper Canadians by telling them that the Capital should always be in Upper Canada, while all the time there is every reason to believe he meant to make Montreal the Capital. There were some very stormy debates in Upper Canada on the subject, and the Conservative party opposed the Union vigorously at first, but Mr. Thompson soft-sawdered them too, and at last carried his point. Mr. Henry Sherwood, a Canadian born, and a very able man and eloquent speaker, was furious, and told the House the Union would be like joining a living man—thereby meaning Upper Canada—to a corpse, meaning Lower Canada. Mr. Sherwood in some respects proved to be mistaken; for after the Union was fairly consummated, under the able management of Monsieur Lafontaine and other powerful French leaders, the corpse was slowly but surely revived—the old well known war cry was passed round, our language, our religion and our laws—and an unbroken phalanx of Lower Canada legislators soon assumed a position in the new Legislature not only able to cope with Upper Canada, but very soon to dictate terms. From that time to this the balance of power has been in the hands of Lower Canada, but the progress of the people has not been equal to their parliamentary progress. In education, in agriculture, and in the spirit of enterprise generally, they are very far behind the people of Upper Canada.

With regard to law matters, in the early days of Fergus our Assizes were held at Hamilton, and it was a very serious business indeed to have anything to do at the said Assizes. Neither jurors nor witnesses got any day's pay or mileage, and as it took us two days to get to Hamilton and two to get back again, people as a general rule avoided heavy law matters as much as possible. Even in criminal cases it was a difficult business to get people to prosecute on account of the expense. Fortunately in those days crime was very uncommon, and in this neighbourhood especially the settlers were of a very respectable description generally. There might be a black sheep here and there, but they were not numerous. I am sure for years I never locked my door, and slept with the window open, and it was the same even in the village. One got an alarm now and then at untimeous hours, but it was either caused by some sickness or accident. I had an excellent medicine chest, with a handy little book of directions, and although I am thankful to say I hardly ever used it myself, I was able to help others at a pinch. One night when I was fast asleep I was wakened by a continued knocking at the window, and on looking steadily at it for a while I saw two faces above the curtain or blind, and was a little scared at first, but it turned out to be the late Mr. Perry and Mr. Thomas Webster, wishing to get some medicine for a child of Mr. Perry's very ill with croup. Another time towards evening I heard a queer fistling noise in my best room, where my books were, and on going in there were the late Mr. Fergusson and his wife hunting for a book. They had found the door (as usual unlocked), and myself absent, and so took possession.

The small debt courts in those days were called the Courts of Requests, and after a while we used to have the court regularly at Fergus. I was a Commissioner for two or three years, and sometimes we had very funny cases, and I can safely say that the patience shown was far more than the people deserved generally. I think there were five of us, and one was appointed chairman alternately. When the old Provost was chairman he very soon decided cases, and although sometimes he was pretty hasty, yet it did good. Mr. Webster was the most patient judge, and really was too good to

the unthankful litigants. As there were no lawyers, the parties were their own pleaders, and very energetic they were sometimes. One gentleman at Elora once, after his case had been decided, made a very impertinent address to one of the Commissioners, winding up with the elegant piece of advice, "put that in your pipe and smoke it," when to his perfect astonishment he was brought back and ordered to pay a fine for contempt, or go to jail, which calmed him down amazingly. There was not much business at these courts, as there was very little room for litigation, and had it not been for some three or four persons, who liked the luxury of a law case, and were proud of their skill in arguing a knotty point, we should have had very little indeed to do. The Commissioners generally dined after court at Mr. Black's Inn, the big room of which was the court room, and the fees were so small that there was scarcely enough to pay the bill, small as it was. The union put an end to the Courts of Requests, and Division Courts took their place. The first County Judge was Mr. A. J. Fergusson, now the Hon. Mr. Fergusson Blair. With regard to the Squirearchy, I think till the time of the union there were two magistrates in Nichol, one in Pilkington, and none in Garafraxa. Mr. Reynolds of Pilkington is I believe the oldest magistrate in the county of Wellington, and from experience I can safely say one of the ablest, most upright and honest. All the Commissioners of the the old Courts of Requests were I believe appointed Justices of the Peace, and I still remember the disgust I felt at hearing that I would have to act as a magistrate, and on a very ugly case too. I disliked the business so much that I went off to chop in the woods, but instead of notice being sent to me officially, a personal friend hunted me out, and I had to make my appearance, and, along with Mr. Reynolds, sit on the case. After this I got the "Provincial Justice," and qualified myself as well as I could for the business, and for some four years, at Elora, Mr Reynolds and myself did all that was required in a large tract of country, and we never had one case appealed during that time. I think I may safely say too, that we got more disputes settled privately than in Court, by getting people together and making peace between them. In those days lawyers were scarce, and the luxury of law rather expensive.

With regard to Municipal matters, the Township authorities were all appointed at the annual meeting on the first Monday of the year, and a serious job it came to be when the voters became numerous. The high officials were the three Township Commissioners, and I think the first three appointed in my time were Messrs. David Gilkison, George Wilson, and James Webster, elected in 1836. The most serious question however for many years was as to what animals should be allowed to run at large, and when it came to the "Pig" question, then was the assembly agitated in a most serious manner, and loud and fierce were the speeches on this most important subject, and the laughing and the jokes were innumerable. At one meeting I well recollect when it was declared that the pigs were to run free, one old settler announced in a clear and distinct manner that he would fill up the holes on the road near his place—and there were plenty nice deep ones there—with the carcases of the unclean animals. Every year the battle was renewed, and the decisions were one time in favor of grumphy's confinement, and the next for his liberty. I can certify that, in my experience at least, live pigs have caused as much, if not more, strife than the other pigs which hold Canadian nectar commonly called whiskey. The next most important business was the appointment of pound-keepers, and it was considered a piece of great fun to make some unpopular person, either socially or politically, a pound-keeper, it being considered by no means a desirable situation, although, to say the truth, they had very little to do. The magistrates settled the road questions at Quarter Sessions, and as they were held in

Hamilton, very little was done in the way of alterations or improvements, except by statute labor. Although there are many standing jokes about statute labor, I must say that it was generally faithfully performed, at least near Fergus, and there was no trouble in getting a little extra labor gratuitously when it was really required. I was quite customary in those days for passengers to be called upon to give something to help the poor fellows who were improving the roads. That something generally went to purchase refreshment stronger than cold water; and indeed if a crossway happened to be making or pulled up, it was better to hand over your mite cheerfully than refuse, as there was no possibility of passing any other way. It was reported that one spirited pathmaster, not in this neighborhood, used to have out a fiddler and a barrel of beer to encourage his men. Everybody had to turn out in old times, as money was scarce, and it was not easy to get substitutes, even if you were willing to commute.

In 1840 the great subject of conversation among politicians was "Responsible Government," and its supporters talked about it, wrote about it, and quarrelled about it till it really became quite wearisome. For my own part the only great difference ever I could see was, that a great part of the power formerly in the hands of the Governor was transferred to the Executive Council, so that his responsibility was diminished and theirs increased, but whether the change has been altogether so beneficial as was promised, is I think very questionable. Over and over again we have seen the ministry of the day doing just as they pleased during the recess of parliament, and after the House met again getting some act or vote passed to whitewash their misdeeds. However, Responsible Government was at last got, and much rejoicing followed the glorious achievement. One eccentric old gentleman characterized it as a "trap set by rogues to catch fools," but we trust his language was rather severe.

In 1840 we had a visit from two well known Canadian gentlemen—the late Hon. Mr. Sullivan and Colonel Chisholm of Oakville. Their intention was to examine the country towards Owen Sound, with a view to open a great Government road, and make free grants to actual settlers. They duly carried out their purpose, and stopped a day at Fergus on a visit to Mr. Webster, who was well acquainted with Colonel Chisholm. Mr. Sullivan visited the school, and being a keen phrenologist, greatly to the astonishment of some of the pupils went up and at once examined their heads. He was a very kindly, pleasant man, and the children were soon convinced that he had no evil intentions. The townships along the new road were named after leading British and Canadian statesmen of that time, as Arthur, Sydenham, Sullivan, Derby, Glenelg, Normanby, and so on. With regard to the system of free grants I must say that its advantages are rather doubtful. The idea of getting land for nothing sounds well, but is the means of bringing many settlers of an inferior kind, too lazy and too profligate to work. It would be better for Government to sell at a low price for ready money—say one dollar an acre for good land—and expend the proceeds on the roads, not all at once, but in two or three years. A settler would then commence on his own freehold property at once, and would have an opportunity of working on the new roads and getting back his purchase money. Generally speaking the country on the line of road from Arthur to Owen Sound is inferior, and in some parts of the County of Grey is so rough and stony as to be of little value, and indeed many of the first clearings appear to be deserted. An agent was appointed by Government, and took up his residence in the village plot of Arthur, and in due course a tavern, store and mill were erected. The first visit I paid to Arthur was in company with Mr. Webster, in winter, and a rougher road I never travelled, indeed before we got home again my boots were worn through. There was only a

track through the woods, and a very circuitous one it was. We used often to see the settlers from Arthur driving down their grists in home-made sleighs called jumpers, the motive power being a single ox most ingeniously yoked up; one time that I was driving with a friend we met a long string of these primitive carriages, and had to pull to one side to make way for them, as it was no use to dispute their passage. There was a celebrated mud hole near the head of Nichol, which was regarded with considerable apprehension by all travellers in that direction, and then there was a rocky place some four miles from Arthur almost as bad. Indeed from Fergus to Arthur was just a variety of bad road, changing from bad to worse, from worse to bad, and then again from bad to worse the whole way. Mr. Webster of Fergus erected a grist mill at Arthur, but unfortunately, from the nature of the bed and banks of the river, the dam (erected at considerable expense) would not hold in the water, and although the property has changed hands repeatedly, I believe it is not much better yet, indeed Arthur village has advanced very slowly considering its age. The country to the North-west, known by the romantic appellation of the "Queen's Bush," now comprising Peel, Maryboro, Minto, &c., was gradually getting tenanted by squatters, many of them respectable people, and who afterwards bought the land they had occupied.

In 1842 the first Municipal Bill for Upper Canada came into operation, and District Councils commenced operations. Our District was called the "District of Wellington," and included, besides the Townships in it at present, Waterloo, Wilmot and Woolwich, of which Township, what is now Pilkington, formed a part. Government appointed the Wardens of the Districts, and the first Warden of Wellington was the late Mr. Fordyce, an honorable, upright man, and a very faithful officer. Nichol being a small Township had only one Councillor, and the first election was about as keenly contested an affair as could well be. Mr. James Webster was requested to stand, but for some reason or another declined at first, so the late Mr. Allan took the field, and commenced a spirited canvass. Well, Mr. Webster was prevailed upon at last to stand, and as Mr. Allan still kept the field, it became a regular contested election, and Mr. Webster only succeeded by a very few votes. This election was held in old St. Andrew's Church, but, very properly, it was never held there again. Mr. Webster made an excellent councillor, and immediately took action to get a new road made to Guelph. Previous to this we had either to go round by Elora, which was sixteen miles, or by Eramosa, which was about eighteen, or had to take short cuts of a very uncertain and often bad quality. After a great deal of petitioning, and coaxing, and debating, the present line of road was surveyed from Guelph to Arthur. Several bees were held in various places to cut out the line, but for many years after this it was in spring and autumn almost impassable, and indeed it was not till it was gravelled that we had what could be called a good road between Guelph and Fergus. The District Councils were undoubtedly of great benefit to the country, and as the members got no pay or allowances, business was done a great deal quicker, and, as far as I have been able to see, fully as well as at present. There was less talk and more work.

Educational matters were beginning now to attract more attention in this part of the country, and in 1841 a new Act was passed, which again was amended in 1843. In that year the District Council appointed me School Superintendent for Nichol. It was a very difficult business for a teacher to get a respectable salary even of fifty pounds a year in the Township of Nichol. The consequence was the teachers could not give their whole time to the business of teaching, and in one or two instances the salary was actually so low as ten dollars a month, and I had to threaten the trustees of one section

that I would recommend their school to be closed unless they paid their teacher better. The plain fact was, the children increased in quite a large proportion compared to the incomes of their parents, and although the people, I do believe, were willing to pay for education, they were not able. Since then great advances have been made in educational matters, and teachers are liberally paid, and a good education can be got for next to nothing. The Free School system is very popular, but I will always maintain that if all property is taxed for educational purposes, education itself ought to be *compulsory*, which is the case in Prussia, and in some of the neighboring States; and a very intelligent gentleman from Boston, whom I met at dinner at Thorp's hotel, told us the system worked well. He told us he had visited Dr. Ryerson, our great educational chief, and had mentioned to him the laws of Massachusetts on this subject. It is not fair that property should be heavily taxed, and the children of the idle, the reprobate, and the careless should run wild in the streets and highways, learning little but evil themselves, and corrupting others. This subject reminds me that in the winter of 1841 or 1842 a large encampment of Indians was made in my woodland, and of course I went up to see them. They were very respectable people from the river Credit, and Wesleyan Methodists. We used to hear them in the evenings singing hymns, and they had testaments in their wigwams, and many of them could read. They were well behaved and honest, and the squaws made quantities of baskets and sold them in the village. Some of the men were fine, big, handsome fellows, and some of the women very fair and comely looking. They had one long shaped wigwam, and two or three small round ones, and were quite pleased when lady visitors, especially, called upon them. I paid them a visit once with a lady visitor, and we sat and cracked away as well as we could for some time. One merry old lady was a great snuffer, and showed us her stock, which she was to take home with her. I remember she had one bladder of Scotch snuff quite full, besides some other parcels of it. I think their minister was a chief called Jones, but he was not with them. They will eat almost anything, and their cookery did not appear very choice. They were very fond of turnips, and got a great many from my farm. I asked one of their hunters one day why he did not kill more wolves, as the bounty was so high. His answer was, "Indians no care to kill wolves; they hunters as well as Indian." They often passed my door, and I had a fine thorough-bred colley, whose house was close to the door, but she would not make friends with the Indians at all. Even when I ordered her into her house she lay and growled and showed her teeth. They killed a great many deer, and stayed almost till spring. A winter or two afterwards another lot of them camped near the village, but of a very different character, being drunken, thieving fellows, and the people in the village were in constant fear of them, and heartily glad when they took themselves off. I have seen a great many Indians both at Quebec and here, and I must say I do not think a great deal of them. The men seem to care very little except for fishing, shooting and trapping, and certainly generally speaking make poor farmers. The women seem more industrious than the men, but it seems to be the will of Providence that they should gradually disappear as the white man gets possession of the country. The settlement near Quebec of Huron Indians is a very poor place, and there is scarcely a pure Indian-blooded family in the place. I visited a large camp once at Pointe Levi, where they had assembled to get their annual presents, and I must say they were a wild looking, dirty, ragged lot, though I daresay before they left they would be much improved with their nice new blankets and showy calicoes. To return, however, to matters affecting Fergus. For two or three years things were very quiet and dull, and the winter of 1842 and 1843 was the longest and severest known in this neighborhood, and there has not been such a

winter since, although 1855 and 1856 was nearly as severe. The snow lay from the 14th November, 1842, till the last week in April, 1843, and the first seed sown near Guelph was about the 6th or 7th of May. Towards the end of this year, 1843, the present respected pastor of Melville Church, the Rev. Mr. Smellie, made his first appearance in Fergus. The Rev. Mr. Gardiner died towards the end of the year 1841, and except occasional supplies there had been no regular services in the church, but the late Mr. Fordyce had kept up the wholesome practice of gathering the people together on the Lord's day by reading a sermon in the church and conducting the customary services of praise and prayer. There is no doubt that poor Mr. Gardiner's last illness was caused by his unwearied exertions, and long rides in very inclement weather. Mr. Smellie was duly placed in December, 1843, and has ministered faithfully and acceptably ever since. The disruption of the Established Church in Scotland in 1843 was followed by the disruption of the Presbyterian Church connected with the Scotch Establishment in 1844, and the Presbyterian Church of Canada was then formed, to which body Mr. Smellie attached himself. We have now five churches in the village instead of one, so that there can be little excuse for ignorance of religious things in this place, except the oldest and most prevalent of any, the want of will.

Towards the end of 1844 there was a general election, and a great sensation in Fergus and the whole County of Waterloo, which was the name of our County, as Mr. Webster was determined to beat Mr. Durand, the sitting member, and after a very hard struggle succeeded. The Warden, Mr. Fordyce, was Returning Officer, and appointed his own deputies. I went as deputy to Eramosa, and had a very pleasant time of it altogether, although there was a little excitement at first, but having had the command of a company of militia in Eramosa, I knew a good number of the voters, and we were very good friends. The queerest scenes I have heard were in Waterloo and Fergus. The German settlers had not taken the oath of allegiance, so under the then law could not vote, and at Fergus my old neighbor the Provost, the Returning Officer, was so determined that Webster should be our representative that he was, to say the least, barely civil to any one who wished to vote for Mr. Durand. I believe, too, some of the *tender sex*, who were freeholders, gave their votes, and their names were recorded, and indeed they had a much better right, as far as property goes, to vote than some of the free and independent in these more enlightened days. Mr. Durand protested, and there was a scrutiny, which resulted in Mr. Webster keeping his seat, both he and Mr. Durand spending a great deal of money for nothing, and the legal gentlemen and the scrutineers pocketing some very nice fees. After many vicissitudes both these gentlemen have come to anchor as honest, respectable County Registrars, a much quieter and happier life than that of a Canadian statesman. We have had many elections since, but none of them so spirited or so exciting as the Webster and Durand election.

During 1843 and 1844 the village of Elora, which had been quite abandoned by the Gilkison family, began to rise into importance under the active management of the Messrs. Ross & Co., who built new mills and a store, and under whose enterprise it soon rivalled Fergus, and afterwards under the late Mr. C. Allan's charge, and by his perseverance and tact outstripped it in the race of improvement.

I think I have now given a sketch (no doubt rather cursory) of the first ten years of the existence of Fergus, and as it is made entirely from memory I hope any inaccuracies or omissions will be forgiven. As regards what is now the village of Fergus, the retrospect on the whole is to an old settler like myself rather sad, as very few of the first inhabitants are left. Some

have left the place for other parts of the world, but the majority have gone to their last home. So has it been and so shall it be to the end of time.

Ah! changed are the days since the cedars dark
Dipped their sprays in the rapid stream,
As it rushed along to the deep black pool
Almost hid from the sun's bright beam.

Ah! gone are the friends of that olden time,
The pioneers bold and true,
Who toiled for their homes in the forest wild
Far away from their mountains blue.

The howl of the wolf is heard no more,
Nor is seen the bounding deer;
Hushed is the cry of the whip-poor-will,
Of the saw-whetter sharp and clear.

All things on this earth with time must change,
And on earth true friends must part;
But a better land and a heavenly home
Await the true Christian heart.

FERGUS, 1865.